MARVEL 84 .com

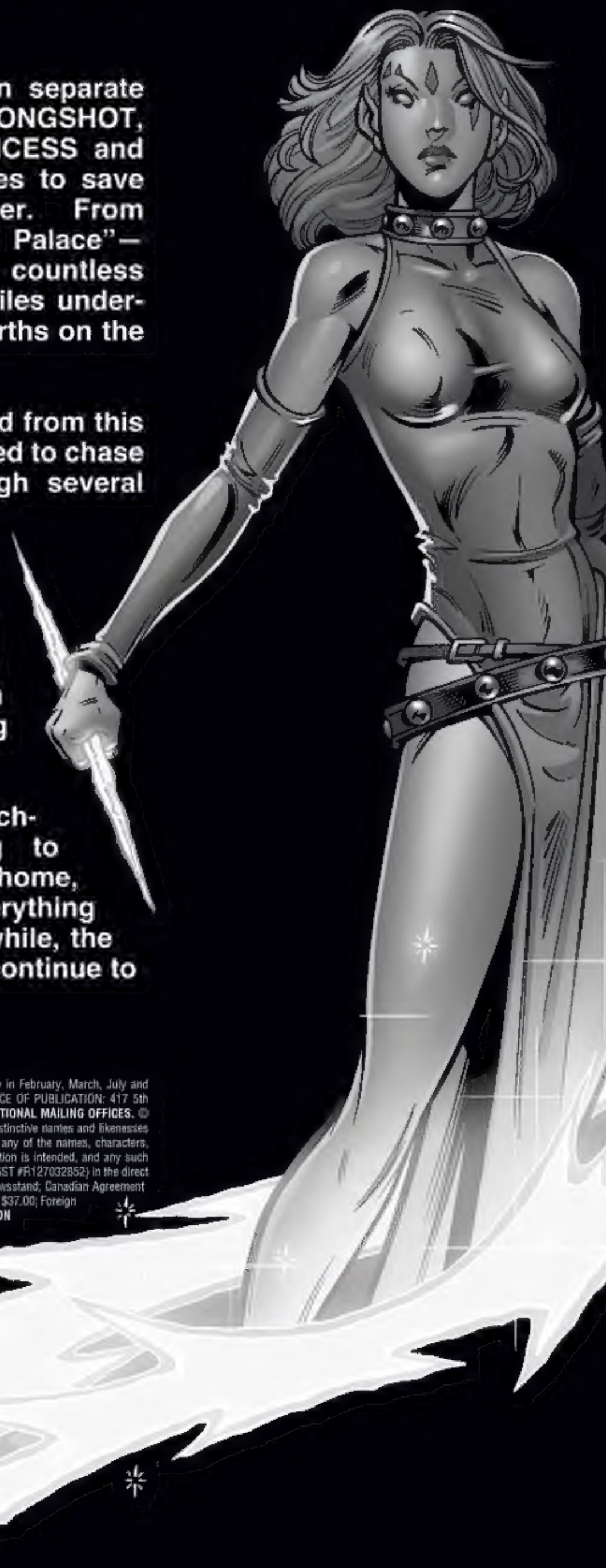
EXILES®

Previously in EXILES:

Gathered together from their own separate realities, BLINK, SABRETOOTH, LONGSHOT, SPIDER-MAN 2099, POWER PRINCESS and HEATHER HUDSON risk their lives to save one imperiled Earth after another. From their headquarters in the "Crystal Palace"—an observatory overlooking the countless realities of the Multiverse—the Exiles undertake missions to save alternate Earths on the brink of disaster.

Recently, the Exiles were distracted from this principal duty when they were forced to chase the evil mutant PROTEUS through several different realities. Proteus steals and inhabits the bodies of others, and he was only defeated after taking over the body of MORPH. There he remains, brainwashed into believing he really is Morph—the ultimate evil imprisoned within a wisecracking, shape-shifting shell.

Now the Exiles are taking a much-needed break before returning to their duties. Some are visiting home, trying to come to terms with everything that's happened to them. All the while, the doomed realities awaiting rescue continue to deteriorate...



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BACK IN THE SADDLE

TONY BEDARD WRITER
J. CALAFIORE PENCILER
MARK MCKENNA INKER
TOM CHU COLORIST

HOLD STILL SO I CAN KILL YOU!

YOU'RE BEAUTIFUL WHEN YOU'RE ANGRY!

THE NAKED PART HELPS, TOO!

HRAHHH!

=GAH!=

SPLUTT

POWER PRINCESS--?!

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

MORRRRPHH!

WHOA, ZARDA! AREN'T YOU GLAD IT'S REALLY *ME*? THAT HIT WOULD'VE *KILLED* POOR LONGSHOT...

LONGSHOT WOULD HAVE *DODGED* IT! YOU, I SHALL POUND INTO *PASTE!*

WHAT DID HE *DO*, ZARDA?

I CAUGHT HIM *SPYING* ON ME AS I *BATHED.*

SKINNY-DIPPING IN THAT INDOOR OCEAN OF OURS IS *HARDLY* A PRIVATE BATH!

SO WHY NOT WEAR YOUR *OWN* FACE?

BECAUSE HE *KNEW* WHAT HE DID WAS *WRONG!*

ZARDA, *PLEASE* DON'T KILL HIM. I'D RATHER NOT WORRY ABOUT YOU PEOPLE WHILE I'M *AWAY*, OKAY?

-HH- VERY WELL...

THE TIME-BREAKERS WILL KEEP THINGS RUNNING SMOOTHLY TILL I'M BACK. JUST DON'T TOUCH ANY BUTTONS--ESPECIALLY YOU, MORPH.

YOU CAN KEEP AN EYE ON ALL OF US FROM THE CONTROL ROOM.

HOW CAN YOU DEPART NOW, HEATHER HUDSON? DO YOU HEAR NOTHING OF OUR WARNINGS?

YOUR MISSIONS GO UNDONE! DISASTER LOOMS!

DISASTER CAN WAIT FOR ANOTHER FEW DAYS.

THEY DO NOT LISTEN.

AND WE CANNOT FORCE THEM--THAT WAS OUR FIRST MISTAKE. THEY LEARN ONLY BY EXPERIENCE.

HUDSON

VERY WELL, HEATHER HUDSON. YOU WILL LEARN SOON THE CONSEQUENCES OF INACTION.

DON'T TELL ME ABOUT CONSEQUENCES! YOU PEOPLE DAMAGED THE MULTIVERSE IN THE FIRST PLACE!

I'LL BE BACK SOON ENOUGH AND WE'LL FIX YOUR BROKEN REALITIES THEN. BUT, BY GOD, I DESERVE TO SEE MY HUSBAND AGAIN!

FLASH

I WANNA VISIT HOME, TOO.

THAT...MIGHT NOT BE SUCH A GOOD IDEA.

WHY NOT?

WELL, UM...

I DID NOT WANT TO SAY THIS IN FRONT OF *THEM*, BUT HEATHER WANTS TO MAKE CERTAIN THAT WE *ALWAYS* HAVE SOMEONE *HERE*...

OH! TO KEEP AN EYE ON THE *TIME-BREAKERS*.

RIGHT... THAT IS WHAT I MEANT...

Y'KNOW, THIS ISN'T SUCH A BAD *LOOK* FOR YOU.

DON'T START.

I WONDER HOW *BLINK* IS FARING.

MUST WE REALLY *SACRIFICE* A REALITY JUST TO TEACH THEM A *LESSON?*

YOU MIS-UNDERSTAND THE *PLAN*, BROTHER...

IT WAS A BEAUTIFUL FUNERAL. IF ONLY *CALVIN* COULD HAVE SEEN HOW MANY PEOPLE CAME.

I LIKE TO THINK HE *KNOWS*, ORORO.

-SNFF- -SNFF- JUST STEER CLEAR OF THAT CASSEROLE THE *MORLOCKS* DROPPED OFF...

TELL ME, BLINK, ON ALL THOSE ALTERNATE EARTHS YOU VISITED, DID *MIMIC* EVER BEAT THE SNOT OUT OF *WOLVERINE?*

AS A MATTER OF FACT...

DREAM ON, BUB!

CLARICE, WE'RE GLAD YOU AND CALVIN *FOUND* EACH OTHER, IF ONLY FOR A WHILE.

WE *LOVED* HIM, Y'KNOW...AND WE REALLY LIKE *YOU.*

THANKS, JEAN. I LIKE YOU GUYS, TOO.

SPLENDID, BECAUSE IN LIGHT OF THE *HARDSHIP* YOU'VE EXPERIENCED AS AN EXILE, AND YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH OUR LATE *TEAM LEADER*...

...WE INVITE YOU TO STAY AND *JOIN* US.

WHOEVER THE SHOCK IS FOLLOWING ME, I'M **WARNING** YA...!

I'LL SHOOT TO **KILL!**

CHILLAX, GABE. I DIDN'T MEAN TO SCARE YOU.

I JUST WANTED TO CATCH YOU **ALONE**, INSTEAD OF DROPPING BY THE HOUSE.

MIGGY?!

GOOD THINKING, BRO. **PUBLIC EYE'S** HAD US UNDER SURVEILLANCE EVER SINCE YOU GOT **UNMASKED** ON LIVE NEWSFEED.

HAVE THEY **HURT** YOU? OR MOM?

NAW, THEY LEAVE US ALONE. THEY'RE JUST WAITING FOR **YOU** TO COME OUT OF HIDING.

ALCHEMAX **DECONSTRUCTED** YOUR APARTMENT. THEY'RE DATA-MINING YOUR **LYLA** UNIT TO FIGURE OUT WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU.

SORRY, GABE. I REALLY HOPED THE **MASK** WOULD AVOID... COMPLICATIONS.

LIFE'S COMPLICATED, MIGUEL.

BUT AS LONG AS YOU'RE OKAY, THIS IS, LIKE, THE **MAXEST** THING EVER! WE'RE **CELEBS** NOW!

JUST DON'T **TELL** ME WHERE YOU'RE HIDING, SO THEY CAN'T **EXTRACT** IT, OKAY?

WHADDYA *MEAN*, YOU DON'T KNOW WHERE HE IS?!

VICTOR, I'VE HAD PEOPLE SEARCHING THE GLOBE FOR *WILD CHILD* EVER SINCE HE WENT MISSING IN ACTION.

FINDING HIM REMAINS A HIGH PRIORITY, BUT THE BOTTOM LINE IS--I DON'T KNOW IF WILD CHILD IS ALIVE OR DEAD.

FRANKLY, VICTOR, HE WAS NEVAH THE SAME AFTER YOU AN' BLINK SKEDADDLED. I THINK HE TOOK IT KINDA *PERSONAL*.

Y'KNOW, MAYBE HE JUST DON'T WANNA BE FOUND. MAYBE IF *YOU* CAME HOME AN' HE KNEW IT, HE'D COME BACK, TOO.

MAYBE.

WELL, I--

SO WHEN *ARE* YOU AND BLINK COMING HOME? I COULD CERTAINLY *USE* YOU BACK ON THE X-MEN.

HUH?

WHAT IS IT?

AW, NO...THE *TALLUS* SAYS ANOTHER REALITY'S ABOUT TO GO DOWN THE TUBES! WORSE--ONE'A MY *FRIENDS* LIVES THERE...

EARTH #3470

ALPHA FLIGHT HEADQUARTERS

HEATHER, I'M STARTING TO FEEL *GUILTY* ABOUT THIS..

..SOME OF THE *OTHERS* WOULD REALLY LIKE TO SEE YOU, TOO. IT'S NOT *FAIR* TO KEEP YOU ALL TO MYSELF.

JAMES, THEY'LL *UNDER-STAND*. I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU IN OVER A YEAR. WE'VE GOT A LOT OF...*CATCHING UP* TO DO.

AND WE'RE DOING A PRETTY GOOD JOB OF IT. I JUST DON'T WANT TO BE SELFISH.

CANADIAN AIR FORCE CHECKPOINT
DEPARTMENT H
AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY

BABY, I ALREADY *TOLD* YOU I HAVE TO GO BACK TO "WORK" IN A DAY OR TWO, AND YOU KNOW THERE'S A LOT RIDING ON WHAT THE EXILES DO.

THIS IS PRECIOUS TIME. HOW DO YOU *REALLY* WANT TO SPEND IT?

WELL...

FAASSH

!

?

AW, NO! HEATHER, I DIDN'T *MEAN* TA--!

INTRUDER ALERT!

JAMES, *WAIT!* HE'S ONE OF *US!*

IT'S AN *EMERGENCY.* *HERE.* ON *YOUR* EARTH.

I ASKED THE BUGS TO ZAP ME STRAIGHT TO YA, BUT I DIDN'T EXPECT...

WHAT'S *WRONG,* SABRE-TOOTH?

YOU BETTER ROUND UP THE *GANG...*

WHICH GANG?

ACTUALLY, *BOTH.*

⊗30 MINUTES LATER...

...NOW THAT I'VE GOTTEN *INTRODUCTIONS* OUT OF THE WAY, LET ME EXPLAIN WHAT WE'RE UP AGAINST

SOME OF YOU EXILES COME FROM REALITIES WHERE THE COLD WAR *ENDED.* NOT HERE.

OH, THE *SOVIET UNION* IS TEETERING ON THE BRINK OF COLLAPSE, BUT THAT'S JUST MADE THEM DESPERATE AND *DANGEROUS...*

RIGHT NOW, AT THE NORTH POLE, THE **SOVIET SUPER-SOLDIERS** ARE LEAD.NG ONE .AST BID TO PROP UP THE EASTERN BLOC...

"...THEY CAN'T AFFORD TO MAINTAIN THEIR ARMY OR KEEP UP WITH WESTERN TECHNOLOGY, SO THEY'VE TURNED TO A **DIFFERENT** KIND OF WEAPON

"THE SUPER-SOLDIER NAMED **DARKSTAR** DRAWS HER POWER FROM SOMETHING THEY CALL THE DARKFORCE."

"THE **SOURCE** OF THE DARKFORCE IS A RUSSIAN E.DER GOD NAMED **CHERNOBOG**, AND NOW THEY'RE TRYING TO GET IT TO SAVE THE MOTHERLAND."

IF THEY SUCCEED IN **UNLEASHING** IT, BY YEAR'S END, A LAYER OF DARKFORCE WILL **SMOTHER** THE ENT.RE EARTH L.KE A .IFELESS BLACK OCEAN.

THE ARCTIC CIRCLE

YOU KNOW, I HAVE A CONFESSION TO MAKE...

...THIS MORNING, I WAS CONSIDERING QUITTING THE EXILES AND STAYING IN MIMIC'S REALITY.

WERE CONSIDERING, OR ARE CONSIDERING?

WELL...

WE'RE APPROACHING THE TARGET ZONE. NORTHSTAR, AURORA, SNOWBIRD AND MARRINA ARE IN POSITION SHAMAN, YOU'RE ON!

<DARKSTAR HAS BEEN AT THIS FOR THREE DAYS WITHOUT REST, **RED GUARDIAN.** HOW MUCH LONGER CAN SHE LAST?>

<AS LONG AS IT TAKES, **URSA MAJOR.** ONCE BEGUN, THE SUMMONING MUST NOT BE INTERRUPTED.>

<**CRIMSON DYNAMO**, WHAT DO YOUR SCANNERS **SEE** IN THERE?>

<NOTHING, **VANGUARD.** ONLY THE ABSENCE OF LIGHT.>

<COMRADES! THE GREAT **CHERNOBOG** INFORMS ME THAT WE ARE UNDER **ATTACK!**>

<AN AIRCRAFT APPROACHES FROM CANADA!>

<ONE PLANE IS SIMPLE ENOUGH TO **SHOOT DOWN!**>

A RECOGNIZE THAT PLANE! LET THIS BE THE LAST OF ALPHA FLIGHT!)
<EH? NO EFFECT! WHAT TRICKERY IS THIS?>
CRIMSON DYNAMO FELL FOR MY DECOY ILLUSION. WE SHALL REMAIN INVISIBLE UNTIL WE GET CLOSE TO CHERNO-BOG.
WILL HE SEE GUARDIAN AND POWER PRINCESS COMING?
NOT UNTIL IT IS TOO LATE.
SKRANNG
THWAMM

<COMRADES! WE MUST PROTECT CHERNOBOG!

<USE YOUR FORCE FIELD, VANGUARD. URSA MAJOR AND I WILL—>

BOOOOOM

KI-KRAKK

<NO! I WAS NOT FINISHED YET!>

<WHAT WAS THAT?>

<I DON'T KNOW...>

BOOOOOM

"<...FELT LIKE SOMETHING HIT THE ICE PACK FROM BENEATH.>

"<SOMETHING LIKE A NUCLEAR TORPEDO>"

I THOUGHT THAT RUSSIAN DEMON-THING COULDN'T STICK AROUND IF WE INTERRUPTED DARKSTAR!

SCANNERS INDICATE IT STILL GAINS STRENGTH

DO THEY SAY WHAT WE MUST DO?

ADDITIONAL EXILES REQUIRED N COMBAT!

THEN BEAM ME DOWN!

WHOOPS!

I, UH, THOUGHT I'D POP IN ON MY FRIENDS...

THOSE BUGS REALLY GOTTA WORK ON THEIR AIM--!

"UH-OH, LOOKS LIKE IT MIGHT'VE *SPOTTED* US..."

MAKE THAT *DEFINITELY* SPOTTED US!

THEY SAY THIS CREATURE ABHORS THE *LIGHT*, AURORA.

THEN LET US WELCOME IT TO THE LAND OF THE *MIDNIGHT SUN*, NORTHSTAR!

YRRAHHRR!

=WHUNG=

=UNGH=

WHAP

SPAK

THIS IS NOT GOING WELL...

CHANCES OF SUCCESS DE-CREASING!

NOTHING WE TRY SEEMS TO ALTER PROBABILITY.

WHERE ARE YOU GOING, SUBJECT-LONGSHOT?

TO THE EXCURSION PLATFORM! YOU CAN HANDLE THIS PLACE ALONE, RIGHT?

WAIT A MINUTE...

I CAN CHANGE THE ODDS. THAT IS WHAT I DO!

INDEED WE CAN.

FAASH

EXILES! I AM HERE TO--

WHOOOSH

YOW!

BACK TO THE DARKNESS, EVIL ONE!

SNOWBIRD, DAUGHTER OF MIGHTY NELVANA, FORBIDS YOU ENTRY TO THIS REALM!

NYAAARRRHHH!

LATER...

LOOKS LIKE WE HAVE THINGS PRETTY WELL WRAPPED UP, BUT I'M NOT SURE HOW IT WOULD'VE GONE IF YOU HADN'T ***WARNED*** US.

HONESTLY, JAMES. I KINDA GET THE FEELING YOU WOULD'VE BEEN ***FINE*** WITHOUT US.

HEATHER, THIS ***TROUBLES*** ME. I EXPECTED TO ***AFFECT*** THE OUTCOME HERE, BUT I REALLY PLAYED ***NO*** PART AT ALL IN OUR VICTORY.

WHAT I SAID EARLIER, ABOUT JOINING MIMIC'S X-MEN? ***FORGET*** IT.

THIS WAS A ***GOOD REMINDER*** OF THE WORK WE'VE LEFT UNDONE. ***OTHER*** WORLDS OUT THERE STILL NEED US.

LET'S GET BACK TO IT, PUP.

YO, ***TIME-BREAKERS!*** WE'RE READY TO COME ***HOME.***

ANY DAY NOW...

SOMETHING'S HAPPENED TO THE *TALLUS--!*

IT'S *VANISHED!*

BUT... WHAT DOES THAT *MEAN?!*

IT MEANS YOU'RE *FIRED.*

SORRY, BUT YOU COULDN'T BE *RELIED* ON, SO THE BOSSES DECIDED IT'S BEST FOR EVERYONE TO *REPLACE* YOU.

BUT THEY WANTEDME TO LET YOU KNOW, THERE'S NO HARD FEELINGS...

...THANKS FOR *EVERYTHING,* GANG! HAVE A NICE LIFE!

NEXT: SNIKT-A-RAMA!